AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1245 — WILLIAM GREEN, President — WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1935 — FRANK MORRISON, Secretary — VOL. 25, NO. 8

It is required of a steward, that a man be found faithful.—1 Cor. 4:2.

Editorials

Tools of 'Big Business'?

Organized labor has always had the utmost confidence in President Roosevelt. William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, states that labor still looks to the President with faith and confidence.

But there are many who believe that "big business" has succeeded in, working in several willing tools to key positions in the Administration. It is contended that the activities of these conscieneeless individuals in high positions in the Government are not only wrecking many of the reasonable hopes and aspirations of labor, but are actually denying in some instances all semblance of right and justice to wage earners.

John L. Lewis, testifying before a Senate sub-committee, denounced Donald R. Richberg as the "reprehensible and dishonorable." President Green and other responsible labor officials have likewise challenged his sincerity in no uncertain terms.

S. Clay Williams, of the National Industrial Recovery Board, was severely criticized and his fitness questioned in a resolution unanimously passed by the 54th annual convention of the A. F. of L.

Leo Wolman, chairman of the Automobile Labor Board, has been soundly denounced by many responsible officials of organized labor.

A complete recital of the reactionary attitude and subversive actions of these three individuals could not possibly be contained in the space available in this publication, nor is it necessary, since much of this attitude and many of these actions are now well known.

Suffice it to say that, so long as reactionary individuals, believed to be willing tools of "Big business," are permitted to hold responsible key positions in the Administration and to sway actions inimical to the public welfare, there can be no industrial peace—and peace is essential to sound progress.

Industrial Safety by Law

The Imperative necessity of strict laws requiring employers to provide their employes with safe machinery and equipment to work with is stressed by the current report of the California Department of Industrial Relations to the Governor's Council. The report says:

"Two freight elevators in a garage were operating without protection at the entrance landing. Three times the employer had been cited to appear before the District Attorney's office and each time promised to remedy the unsafe conditions, also that he would not permit them to occur again. Upon the employer's failure to do any of these things, it was decided to seek a Supreme Court injunction prohibiting him from operating these elevators in an unsafe condition.

The employer must have sensed our intention to stop this unsafe condition, because before the injunction could be issued he put a gang of men to work all night and put his elevators in good condition."

The action of the Industrial Relations Department in finally compelling the employer to make the elevator safe is commendable, but the fact that he was cited three times to appear before the authorities for violation of the state safety law indicates an uncalled-for delay in compelling compliance with the law. It would seem that the first refusal of an employer to provide for safety of his employes as required by law should automatically result in the immediate application of the statute to him. Any delay compels the workers to run the danger of injuries in operating the unsafe machinery or equipment.

Workers should promptly report to the proper authorities unsafe working conditions. Otherwise, unscrupulous employers, cunning in their devices to get away with violations, are likely to be the means of imposing serious injuries on their workers.

HUGH V. REILLY IS LAID TO REST

General Organizer For A. F. of L. Passes Away At Home In New Jersey; Mourned By Host Of Friends.

By A. F. of L. News Service.

Newark, N. J.—Hugh V. Reilly, one of the best-known labor figures in New Jersey and nationally known as a general organizer for the American Federation of Labor, passed away at his home here, during the afternoon of February 16, following a long siege of illness. Burial was at Holy Cross Cemetery, Arlington, Wednesday morning.

At the request of Secretary Morrison, William J. Murphy, A. F. of L. organizer, officially represented the American Federation of Labor at the funeral, which was attended by many other labor officials.

Mr. Reilly was born in Easton, Pa., 59 years ago and had been active in organized labor practically all of his working life, 38 years of which has been spent in New Jersey. He was a former secretary of the State Federation of Labor and was business agent for Machinists' Local No. 204, of Newark, for eight years.

Mrs. Reilly, the former Mary Harmon, died only nine months ago. Two sons, Edward F. and Hugh V., Jr., and three daughters, Mrs. Walter Murphy and Misses Claire and Marie Reilly, survive.

The passing of Hugh V. Reilly is mourned by a host of friends, in whose affections he can never be replaced.

LABOR INJUNCTION BAN OPPOSED BY LAWYERS

By A. F. of L. News Service.

New York.—Running true to form, the New York County Lawyers' Association adopted resolution opposing a bill pending in the State Legislature which would curtail the power of State judges to punish for violations of injunctions in labor disputes.

The organized lawyers also expressed their firm opposition to legislation limiting the hours of work in mercantile establishments to eight per day and requiring all employes to quit work at 5 P. M., except on Friday and Saturday, when they would be permitted to work until 8 P. M.

Another measure opposed is the hours of work in State institutions to eight per day, in place of the 12-hour day now permitted by law—the latter also brought spirited condemnation from the attorneys.

JOHNSTON MOVES UP

By A. F. of L. News Service.

Lieut. Kilbourne Johnston, son of Gen. Hugh S. Johnson, has been appointed Assistant to the Code Administration Director, D. M. Nelson, the National Industrial Recovery Board announced.

John W. Upp, of Ardmore, Pa., who has served as Acting Assistant Division Administrator, succeeds Lieutenant Johnston as Acting Division Administrator for the Manufacturing Division.

LOS ANGELES RAILWAY FACING COURT ACTION

By A. F. of L. News Service.

Los Angeles, Calif.—That the Los Angeles Railway Corporation and the Los Angeles Motor Coach Company violated Section 7-A by discharging employes for union affiliation and activity, the National Labor Relations Board has ruled. The union involved is the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employes of America, Division 997.

The decision held that the railway corporation violated the law by discharging Charles Roach, G. E. Hawley, Walter Vanden, Earl Rhodes and L. R. Wood. The coach company's violation was the discharge of Raymond N. Kirkpatrick.

Unless the companies notify the board that "full and immediate reinstatement" has been offered the discharged employes, the case will be referred by the board to the authorities for appropriate action under the California Industrial Recovery Act. The decision of the board rendered December 22, 1934, ended with a complaint of failure to bargain collectively.

FOOD PRICES REACH NEW HIGH; WAGES LOW

By A. F. of L. News Service.

In spite of the fact that average wages are considerably lower, food prices have advanced to a new high, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor. Based on an index figure of 100 per cent for 1913, the present retail index is 119.8.

Wholesale food prices have reached the highest level since the Labor Department inaugurated its weekly index, prices now being 33 per cent above prevailing wholesale prices on March 4, 1933.

WOULD RESTRICT ALL "COMMUTING ALIENS"

By A. F. of L. News Service.

Washington.—A bill has been introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressmen George G. Sadowski, of the First Michigan District, to restrict the habitual commuting of aliens from foreign contiguous territory to employment in the United States.

This bill specifies that any alien or foreigner or citizen of a foreign country who habitually commutes between such a country and the United States to hold a position shall be held to be an immigrant and shall be excluded from the United States unless they are in possession of an unexpired temporary visa to each separate application for admission or in possession of an unexpired re-entry permit for each separate application to return from foreign territory.

Due to the unemployment situation now in this country, Congressman Sadowski state that this should become a part of the law, thereby eliminating labor competition with foreign labor. Large numbers of pensioners in Detroit are held by habitual commuters.

WOLMAN OUTBURST OMITS MAIN FACTS

William Green Answers Bid Of Auto Board Chairman To Win Public By Clever Words.

By A. F. of L. News Service.

Washington.—A lengthy statement issued by Dr. Leo Wolman, February 16, just before the start of President Green's tour of leading automobile centers, was apparently designed to win public support for the so-called Automobile Labor Board with cleverly worded words. The statement stretched points to make everything appear favorable, but entirely omitted the principal facts in connection with its past record, which has been bitterly assailed by labor officials.

President Green Replies

Following the cleverly worded outburst by Wolman, President Green, of the A. F. of L. commented upon the address. He stated:

"Evidently the report is designed to allay the opposition of automobile workers against the work of the board and the board itself. The Automobile Board has lost the confidence of the automobile workers. This lost confidence cannot be regained through the submission of figures regarding the number of cases handled and an analysis of the disposition made of such cases. In finding conclusions in this report the automobile workers will be reminded that in no single instance has the board overruled the action of any worker who had been discharged or discriminated against, reemployed or rehired. In no instance where a worker was put back to work through the mediation effort of the board, was he paid for any portion of the time lost. Furthermore, in no instance was a minority report ever filed by the labor member of the Automobile Labor Board. He always agreed with the other two members of the board. This is most extraordinary and unusual, when it is considered that the hundreds of cases of discharge and discrimination were directed toward collective bargaining they joined labor unions and became active as officers or representatives thereof.

"The board has served more as a personal agency for the companies than as an independent tribunal. It made recommendations that were not decisions. The Automobile Labor Board lost a great opportunity to invite and secure the confidence of the automobile workers. It cannot function successfully without the confidence, cooperation and support of the automobile workers.

"The automobile workers, members of federal labor unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, will have nothing to do with the Automobile Labor Board. They insist that it shall pass out of the picture and that the Independent National Labor Relations Board under Resolution No. 44 be created.

"The automobile workers should not be compelled to go on strike in order to secure removal of the Automobile Labor Board as it is now constituted."

FARM WAGES INCREASED 5 PER CENT IN 1934

By A. F. of L. News Service.

Washington.—The index of farm wages was 86 on January 1, compared with 81 a year ago and with a pre-war base of 100, according to the Bureau of Agriculture Economics.

There was a decline of seven points in the index during the last quarter of 1934, but this decline was only about one-half the average seasonal decrease during the years 1925-32. Sharpest declines occurred in the West North Central States where income from marketings and farm wages suffered the greatest blow from drought.

Rates per day without board ranged on January 1 from $2.40 in New Hampshire down to 70 cents in Virginia, and averaged $1.36 for the United States as compared with $1.34 on October 1 and with $1.21 on January 1, 1934.

The supply of farm hands was reported at 104.3 per cent of normal on January 1, compared with 104.7 on October 1, and with 104.7 on January 1, 1934. The supply usually increases during the last quarter of the year, it is stated. Pacific Coast States were the only group to report a larger supply of workers this January than last.

The demand for farm labor declined less than seasonally from October 1 to January 1. Maintenance at or above pre-war levels of prices received by farmers is cited as a principal reason for this situation. Demand for farm labor on January 1 averaged 4.1 points higher than a year ago.

The bureau says that "from the standpoint of price-wage relationships, farmers were in a decidedly better position on January 1 than for some time. The ratio of prices received for farm products to farm wage rates was 117 per cent of pre-war as compared with ratios of 110 for October 1, and 95 on January 1, 1934."

"STRETCH-OUT" HALTED BY TEXTILE WORK ASSIGNMENTS

Present restrictions of work assignments in the wool, cotton and silk textile industries have been extended until 30 days after the Textile Work Assignments Board submits its report to the President, the NRA has announced.

The Assignments Board is preparing a permanent plan for regulation of work assignments in the three industries, to be submitted for approval and submission of its report has been extended "a reasonable time after January 1, 1935," by executive order.

The extension announced today continues the period during which present work assignments may not be increased. It is in the form of an executive order for the wool textile industry, and of amendments to the cotton and silk textile codes.

The order halts further "stretch-out" work assignments, against which labor has bitterly complained.

AUTO PRODUCTION AHEAD OF PURCHASING POWER

High Increases Not Justified By Business Betterment Indicates "Stock-Up" To Fight Labor.

By A. F. of L. News Service.

Detroit, Mich.—Employment in the automobile industry increased 23 per cent in January, according to the Michigan Department of Labor and Industry. The increase in December was 19 per cent. This enabled employment as a whole in the state to increase 16 per cent in January.

Factory payrolls in Michigan in December were $35,530,952 and increased to $41,548,460 in January. The cost of living also went up.

According to the A. F. of L. Monthly Survey of Business, automobile production in January was nearly 100 per cent greater than in the same month last year. In the meantime, the purchasing power of the country has increased only a little, in no way justifying the huge increase in auto production.

Many people believe that the manufacturers, realizing the unfair and un-American attitude toward labor that has been their policy in the past cannot last, they are "stocking up" in the expectation of labor troubles which they have invited by their labor attitude and policies.

NEW HOUSING BILL TO BE INTRODUCED

Outgrowth Of Washington Conference Expected To Prove Of Vast Public Benefit.

By A. F. of L. News Service.

New York.—Announcement of a federal public housing bill, which is shortly to be introduced in Congress by Senator Wagner, of New York, is made in the February issue of Public Housing Progress, organ of the National Public Housing Conference. The bill is based on the recommendations made by the policy committee of the organization to the second national conference on slum clearance and public housing, which met in Washington, January 18-20. Administration support is being given the bill, which will be introduced in the House by Congressman Ramspeck, of Georgia.

The bill provides for the transfer of the present Housing Division of the Public Works Administration to the Department of the Interior, where it will function as a permanent body for the provisions of low-rental housing in the cities of the United States and its possessions.

Under the powers vested in the new housing division, it will be possible for cities with housing authorities to engage in the direct construction of low-rental housing, on funds provided for this purpose by Congress. Grants and loans to municipal housing authorities for such work will be subject only to standards set by the central housing board in Washington, according to the terms of the bill.

In order that rents in these new housing projects may be kept at the absolute minimum, provision is made in the bill for funds to be loaned to local authorities at the same rate of interest on which the Federal Government borrows its money. Other liberal provisions carry on the precedent established by the Public Works Administration in granting to cities 30 per cent of the cost of labor and materials.

Following is the declaration of purpose for the bill: "Congested and insanitary housing conditions throughout the urban centers of the nation which seriously affect the public health, safety, morality and welfare and undermine the standards of living of the American people are hereby declared to exist. The correction of these conditions being impossible by means of private initiative and funds, it is essential and is declared to be the policy of Congress to give its financial aid in grants and loans and technical assistance likely to encourage local government initiative and participation, to secure the gradual demolition of existing insanitary and unsafe housing, and the construction of new housing facilities to be available on a low rental to persons of low income. Therefore there shall be created and authorized the agencies and instrumentalities of the Federal Government to the purpose of attaining these ends hereby declared, and their necessity in the public interest is hereby declared as a matter of legislative determination."

SECURITY PLANS WILL AID INSURANCE FIRMS

By A. F. of L. News Service.

New York.—Existing life insurance companies have little to fear from the social security proposals contained in President Roosevelt's recent message, Standard Statistics concludes from a study of the plans. On the contrary, the vast amount of discussion of the proposals in the offing may have a stimulating effect on the insurance business.

Under the social security program advocated by the Administration, every employed person making less than $250 a month will be required to buy an annuity, backed by the Federal Government, while higher salaried individuals will be offered an optional insurance policy to provide protection against poverty in old age.

At first blush, it appears that this plan would cut heavily into the business of life insurance companies. The Government's old age insurance, however, includes life insurance only to the extent that taxes paid in behalf of the insured person, plus accrued interest, have not been exhausted by pension payments to him at the time of his death. The plan, therefore, enters into direct competition with life insurance companies chiefly in the matter of straight annuities.

The latter constitute a relatively insignificant portion of the life companies' business. In fact, many economists regard such operations with little favor. Government competition in this respect, therefore, is of no particular moment to the life insurance companies.

The point has been made that the effect of the Administration's plan may be to educate the public to the desirability of insurance in general, with the result that demand for life insurance would be stimulated. The better known insurance factors which were chiefly responsible for the increase of more than 15 per cent in new life insurance written in 1934, then, might find an ally in the social security program in coming years.

PREVAILING WAGE CLAUSE IMPORTANT

Senator Wagner Among Those Who Makes Strong Pleas For McCarran Amendment To Relief Works Bill.

By A. F. of L. News Service.

Washington.—The unanimousness of the position of organized labor in fighting for a prevailing wage clause in the proposed Public Works Relief Bill, now before the Senate, appears to be winning the active support of an increasingly wide circle of influential people.

Thousands of telegrams have been received from all parts of the country, by nearly all members of the U. S. Senate, urging them to support the proposed McCarran Amendment, which was originally adopted and later rejected on reconsideration in committee.

Senator Wagner Speaks

U. S. Senator Robert F. Wagner, of New York, is among those who have made strong pleas in behalf of a prevailing wage clause. Among other statements by Senator Wagner, speaking on the floor of the Senate, was the following:

"In our desire to preserve private interest rights we have gone to what I consider the unnecessary and unwarranted length of charging 4 per cent for money for low-cost slum-clearance housing. No one has entertained the proposition to limit the personal profits that result from public spending. Why then this disregard for the wage standards that have been built up by ceaseless years of unremitting toil? Is the worker an outcast in our society? Has he not borne the main shock of the depression with stoic fortitude and with unfaltering faith in American institutions? Does he not shoulder the main burden of taxation? Does he not go to the front line in the hour of national danger? Does he not pour his strength into the creation of all our wealth? What kind of a recovery can we build by assaulting his standards of life?

"Penny wisdom and pound foolishness has not been the policy of the 'New Deal.' Let us go onward without regress and do that we set for the American people."

ASK UNION LABEL ON STATE PRINTING

Minnesota Leads Way As Union Label Trades Department Appeals To All States For Action.

By A. F. of L. News Service.

Washington — The Union Label Trades Department of the A. F. of L., through J. M. Ornburn, secretary-treasurer, is appealing to state labor federations of labor to urge passage by state legislatures of a resolution requiring that state printing be done by union labor. The state bodies are also asked to co-operate fully with Allied Printing Trades Councils in the various state capitals.

The House of Representatives of Minnesota has lead the way in this respect by adopting the following resolution:

"Whereas, It has been the custom in previous sessions of the House of Representatives to have the 'Typographical Union and the Printers' union label printed on the envelopes of the official printed matter used by the House members, because this label carries the assurance that employment has been employed, as well as the fact that the right of collective bargaining with a standard of wages and hours is observed between employers and employes; therefore be it

"Resolved, By this House of Representatives, that our stationery, envelopes and office desk matter be printed in such printing shops as can furnish the 'Typographical Union' label and do display same on said printing."

HOUSING BORROWERS PAY LOANS PROMPTLY

By A. F. of L. News Service.

Washington.—The Federal Housing Administration announced here that a country-wide survey shows a remarkably high degree of promptness on the part of borrowers in making their monthly payments.

This supplements the results of a similar survey made public several days ago, which showed that loans under Title I of the National Housing Act are creating new credit that would not have been used without the stimulus of the Modernization Credit Plan.

Those commercial and industrial loans which mark the start which are leading in modernization loan activity reported that, after a period of nearly nine months, more than 99½ per cent of the loans made by them under their insurance contract do not have a single payment in default and only sixteen days overdue. Finance companies participating in the plan report that the lower percentage. This is due to the wider areas over which they operate and the consequent greater time required for payments recorded at their head office.

METAL POLISHERS WIN

By A. F. of L. News Service.

Frankfort, Ind.—The Indiana Brass Company, Frankfort, was required to recognize the Metal Polishers' International Union, Local No. 24, as the representative of the employes of its polishing department in a decision announced by the National Labor Relations Board. This requirement was predicated upon a finding of the Board that the company had violated Section 7-A by refusing to deal with the local as the representative of those employes.

President Green Tells Auto Workers Company Unions In Industry Must Go

Makes Several Speeches In Tour Of Auto Centers Prior To Big Conference Of Workers In Detroit, February 23; Alleged Labor Board Denounced.

By A. F. of L. News Service.

Detroit, Mich.—"We plan to attack and wage relentless war on the company union," William Green, president of the A. F. of L., declared, in opening his speaking tour of automobile centers.

"It is the company's pet plaything. We hold it is unfair for either industry or government to force us to strike to get rid of it—but get rid of it we will!" Another significant statement was: "Since the automobile industry has thrown down the gauntlet, it is for labor to accept the challenge."

Huge Crowds Attend

Huge crowds of automobile workers heard William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, deliver a challenge to the employers in the automobile industry during the week. Approximately 6,000 workers jammed into the Metal Trades Auditorium in Cleveland, Ohio, and an equal number filled the Civic Auditorium in Toledo, Ohio, while in St. Louis over 12,000 packed the Municipal Opera House to hear President Green speak in the St. Louis Theater.

In each city the workers unanimously accepted a resolution denouncing the American Federation of Labor as their duly accredited bargaining agency in the automobile industry. President Green was authorized to act as their duly chosen representative and he was requested to immediately proceed in requesting of the proper executives of the automobile industry a conference for the purpose of negotiating a mutually satisfactory working agreement relative to wages, hours and conditions of employment.

Auto Board Denounced

Both Mr. Green and F. J. Dillon, general organizer of the American Federation of Labor in the automobile industry, who introduced him, insisted that the Automobile Labor Board has proved an absolute failure and that "it must go if automobile workers are to obtain justice from the government." That the elections being held by this board is a farce is proved by the way in which the workers in each city have condemned them and unanimously chosen the representatives of Labor as their bargaining agency. In the place of the board Mr. Green advocated that under Public Resolution 44 a new impartial board be set up embodying the same principles and powers as the National Labor Relations Board.

Employers who refuse to recognize the rights of their employes were severely criticised by President Green and he warned them that "if an industrial war results it will be because of the failure of the employer to concede to his employes rights and privileges which they have a right to demand and be entitled to."

Conference Called

The United Automobile Workers' Male Chorus, composed of 25 voices, went to Cleveland and Toledo from Detroit to add a special ear and sanz at each of the meetings.

The National Council of the Automobile Workers' Unions will convene in Detroit on February 23, for the purpose of laying general plans and formulating demands upon the employers of the industry. President Green's speech here will be broadcast over the NBC network.

MINERS ARE SEEKING 30-HOUR WORK WEEK

Proposed New Agreement Would Affect 350,000 Workers; Few Wage Adjustments Asked.

By A. F. of L. News Service.

Washington — The United Mine Workers of America, seeking a new working agreement with the coal operators in the bituminous fields of what is termed the "Appalachian region," to replace the present one, which expires April 1, asks for a 30-hour work week and slight wage adjustments.

John L. Lewis, president of the miners, in outlining the proposed new contract, stated that both wage and hour demands of the union would mean an addition of only about 22 cents a ton in the production costs of bituminous coal, regarded as very low in terms of advancing selling prices of coal and general increases in living costs.

There are almost 350,000 miners in the Appalachian region, which includes Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Eastern Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois and adjacent territory. About 100,000 are in other bituminous-producing districts, including the Southwest and far West. Wage agreements for all expire April 1. The union asks for a two year contract be for a period of two years.

J. W. WILLIAMS NAMED BY HOUSING CONFERENCE

By A. F. of L. News Service.

New York.—It was announced at the headquarters here of the National Public Housing Conference that J. W. Williams, president of the Building Trades Department, American Federation of Labor, has been named and has accepted a vice presidency of the National Public Housing Conference.

FRANK MCKENNA IS BURIED IN CANADA

Vice President Of Railway Carmen Since 1913, Dies In Montreal; Highly Regarded By All Labor.

By A. F. of L. News Service.

Montreal, Quebec.—Organized labor of the entire North American continent was severely shocked by the death here at 6:40 P. M., February 17, of Frank McKenna, vice president of the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen of America. The funeral was attended by hundreds of labor officials, including the A. F. of L. executive council.

At the request of Secretary Morrison, Joseph Teletier, of Montreal, international organizer for the A. F. of L., officially represented the American Federation of Labor at the funeral. In addition to Secretary Morrison, Washington of President Green, Secretary Morrison also sent telegrams of condolence to the family. Mr. Frank Broad, to be conveyed to Mrs. McKenna and the family.

Frank McKenna was born in Manchester, England, about 60 years ago. He was elected vice president of the Brotherhood's twelfth annual convention in Milwaukee, in 1903, and served in this position continuously until his death. Prior to his election as vice president, Mr. McKenna had been chairman of the Canadian Pacific Joint Protective Board. He had lived in British Columbia for many years and devoted much time and effort to organization work in Western Canada. He was held in high esteem by all labor and his passing is deeply mourned throughout the labor movement.